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## UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

MR. THOMAS MCKEAN, of Philadelphia, has given \$100,000 to the University of Pennsylvania for a building for the law school.

MR. JOHN D. ROCKFELLER, of New York, has given an additional \$10,000 towards the erection of a hall at Mt. Holyoke College, and if the conditional gift of Dr. Pearson is included the sum of \$175,000 has now been collected for the endowment fund.

BROWN UNIVERSITY has received \$5,000 by the will of the late Eustace Fitz, of Chelsea, Mass.

FERRY HALL, one of the buildings of the State Agricultural College, Pullman, Washington, has been destroyed by fire, causing a loss of about \$40,000.

THE registration in Harvard College is this year 1,814, an increase of 6.2 per cent. over last year. The number of students in the Lawrence Scientific School is 407, an increase of 9.5 per cent.

It is stated that the decree excluding foreign students from the medical classes of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris will shortly be withdrawn.

DR. TH. CURTIUS, professor of chemistry at Bonn, has been called to Heidelberg as successor to Victor Meyer.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

## HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AT ITHACA FOR MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

SINCE the publication of the official announcement of the Society the Ithaca Hotel has been sold, and the new owners have closed it for extensive repairs. That hotel will not be open for guests nor for the annual dinner. The other hotels will be open. The Clinton House can accommodate from 50 to 75 and the new Hollister from 30 to 40 guests.

The annual dinner announced for the Ithaca Hotel will be held at the dining rooms in Cascadilla Place, these being the largest and pleasantest dining rooms upon the University campus in Ithaca. The time and cost will be as in the announcement.

A limited number of ladies can secure rooms and board at Sage College. Rates can be had upon application to the Local Secretary. There are numerous pleasant rooms in the near neighborhood of Cascadilla Place, which, with board in the house or at Cascadilla Place, would cost from 75 cts. to \$1.50 per day. The Local Secretary will secure rooms for any who apply to him.

S. H. GAGE, *Chairman*,  
W. W. ROWLEE, *Secretary*,  
*of the Local Committee.*

ITHACA, N. Y.,  
November 30, 1897.

## THE CAIRN ON THE ENCHANTED MESA.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have just read Professor Libbey's letter, in your issue of the 26th instant, in which he intimates that the lichen-covered cairn on the summit of the Enchanted Mesa was erected by himself. It now only remains for Professor Libbey to say that the ancient potsherds scattered through the talus, the artifacts found on the summit, the remains of the ancient ladder-trail and all the other evidences of the former occupancy of the summit of the mesa are the result of his own ingenuity. The last word will then have been said.

F. W. HODGE.

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,  
WASHINGTON, November 29, 1897.

[As Professor Libbey states that the cairn was erected by him Mr. Hodge should certainly correct his mistake. Whether or not the Mesa was formerly inhabited is another question.

ED. SCIENCE.

## A POSSIBLE SOLUTION OF THE SEALING PROBLEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In the article in SCIENCE last week on the Sealing Conference, and in the innumerable articles that have been published since the question became prominent, I have not noticed any mention of what seems to an outsider the most natural solution. It is absurd for the United States to claim that it has any right to control the action of Canada on the high seas on the ground of humanity to animals or of commercial interests. Great

Britain would have just as much right to protest against the extermination, by the United States, of the buffalo and the beaver.

It has been suggested that the seals might be exterminated, but this would be sawing off the branch with the man on it, unless the proposers of this plan mean by it what I wish to suggest. This is that so many seals be killed on the Islands that there would not be enough left in the seas to make pelagic sealing profitable. It would seem possible to keep a small herd on the Islands and the killing of the small number would be very profitable, as the price of seal-skins would doubtless rise. It looks to me as if we had the trump card in our hands and could offer Great Britain almost any conditions on pelagic sealing that we like.

P. C. H.

NEW YORK, November 27, 1897.

#### OBSERVATIONS ON THE PHYSIOGRAPHY OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS.

THE following notes on the character and elevation of the Cretaceous peneplain in western Massachusetts were made during a trip in the Berkshire region in the spring of 1897. The area covered lies between the Housatonic and Connecticut lowlands and south of the Boston and Albany Railroad.

From map-study alone the tendency is to locate the peneplain by the broadest tracts of level country to be found upon the map and to call what lies above monadnocks. It was found, however, that this estimate placed the peneplain altogether too low. The broad spaces proved on observation to be broad, shallow tracts of etched-out country, and most of what had been supposed from map-study to be monadnocks fell into a very good level skyline. The region contains but few monadnocks, and these of small size, their size and number decreasing from north to south.

In the township of Hinsdale the peneplain lies at a height of 2,050 to 2,100 feet; at Washington Centre it falls to 2,000 feet; and seven miles in a south-southeasterly direction, near Becket Centre, it is but 1,850 feet in height. Between Sandisfield Centre and New Marlborough, about seventeen miles due south of Washington, the height of the peneplain de-

creases to 1,750 feet; at Tolland Centre its elevation is about 1,550 feet; and at Blandford Centre, about eight miles to the northeast, the same. By comparison of these points the following conclusions were reached:

(1) The peneplain dips from about north-northwest to south-southeast.

(2) Its fall in twenty-five miles is about 550 feet, a rate of twenty-two feet to the mile.

An apparent consequence of this slope of the peneplain is the prevailing south-southeast courses of the streams, great and small, throughout the area. Along the escarpments where the upland falls off into the Housatonic lowland or into the Connecticut lowland the streams naturally follow the steeper gradient and have cut east and west courses some distance back into the upland, though even these streams in their upper courses conform more and more to the habit of the other streams. The long axes of the lakes and ponds also lie prevailing northwest and southeast, and the majority of the long, straight stretches of road follow the same direction.

ROLAND B. DIXON,  
CHARLES D. DREW.

#### SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

*The Dawn of Astronomy, a study of the temple-worship and mythology of the ancient Egyptians.* By J. NORMAN LOCKYER. New York and London, The Macmillan Co. First edition, 1894; second edition, 1897. Octavo, pp. 432. Illustrated. Price, \$3.

Sir Norman Lockyer first gave his attention to the questions treated in this book in the year 1890 and they are stated in his preface somewhat as follows: It is a matter of common knowledge that many of the churches of England are so constructed that their eastern windows face the point of sunrise on the day of the patron saint. For example, the churches dedicated to St. John the Baptist face nearly northeast. The question arises whether the Egyptian temples have a similar orientation to the sun or to some star. This can be completely determined by accurate surveys of the temple sites; by an investigation of the inscriptions, etc.; by a study of the mythology and history of the people; by the calcu-